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PRIORITY THEMES

PEACE: WOMEN AND THE PEACE PROCESS

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The Commission on the Status of Women, at its thirty-fourth session, selected the issue of "Women and the peace process" as the priority theme in the area of peace for consideration at its thirty-seventh session in 1993. The present report notes at the outset that women are virtually absent from the peace process at the official level. It addresses two polar questions: what the role of women has been both in the peace process through non-governmental channels and in the military. It concludes that considerable influence has been exerted by the efforts of non-governmental organizations, which have not yet affected official processes. It notes that women have always been part of the military but that neither in the past nor in the present do they participate on an equal basis, leaving the military as the one remaining male institutional bastion. The report suggests new issues to be investigated.

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Commission on the Status of Women, at its thirty-fourth session held in 1990, selected women and the peace process as one of its priority themes under the objective of peace to be considered at its thirty-seventh session to be held in 1993.

2. The importance of the participation of women in various aspects of the peace process, such as conflict resolution, international cooperation, multilateral and bilateral negotiations and disarmament efforts, was stated in the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. 1/ The Forward-looking Strategies emphasized in particular the need for the active participation of women in the promotion of international peace and cooperation at the decision-making level on an equitable basis. The first review and appraisal of the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies in 1990 concluded that: "Despite the progress made in some areas, international, regional and national conflicts persist, and women continue to number among their main victims. At the same time, women are no more prominent among those making decisions on conflict than in the past." Recommendation XX stated that:

> "Governments should be encouraged to increase the participation of women in the peace process at the decision-making level, including them as part of delegations to negotiate international agreements relating to peace and disarmament and establishing a target for the number of women participating in such delegations.
>
> "The United Nations and the international non-governmental organizations concerned should continue to monitor and support women's increased involvement in the peace process."

3. The maintenance of peace requires both might and right. These must be congruent: without might, justice is vulnerable; without right, force is terrible.

4. Citizens contribute to the peace process in three ways. The first is to focus primarily on ending or preventing war, which is often done through non-governmental peace organizations that are committed to non-violent forms of action. Women have been highly active in these organizations. The second is to use force or the threat of force to make or keep peace. To date, women have played only a limited role in this process, which emphasizes might, the military and the executive branch of government. The third is to accept a temporary and limited peace-keeping role between adversaries. The United Nations has been accepting increased responsibility of this kind. Women have had a variable role in this process.

5. The present report reviews the important role that women have long played in non-governmental peace efforts. It discusses the reasons why they have played such a limited role in the efforts that use force. Finally, it reviews the potential role of women in United Nations peace-keeping and the value of increasing their use in the future.

I. WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN NON-GOVERNMENTAL ACTIVITIES RELATED TO PEACE

6. Women's participation in non-governmental activities related to peace has been long, strong and visible. Women's peace activities have evolved in recent

history, taking various forms, changing focus and priorities and emerging in different regions but always clearly conveying women's dissatisfaction and concern with the state of international and national affairs related to peace. The resort of women to primarily grass-roots, non-governmental activities indicates that existing structures do not provide for an articulation between Governments and women's interests and views. Thus, women have had to seek non-governmental means to make their views known or to press their goals.

A. Women's peace organizations in history

7. The richness of women's activities related to peace is reflected in numerous examples found in history. Looking at the past 150 years, the first all-women's national societies were founded in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America between 1820 and 1830. By 1852, the Olive Leaf circles were issuing the first international women's publication entitled "Sisterly Voices". Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, following much social upheaval, women's peace organizations sprang up all over Europe and an international network of women was created with members from many European countries as well as Japan, the United States and Polynesia. Towards the end of the century, some women, such as Clara Zetkin and Rosa Luxemburg, became particularly visible in promoting the ideas of non-violence, sisterhood and a rejection of nationalism, chauvinism and war. Bertha von Suttner of Austria, author of the book Lay Down your Arms!, inspired Alfred Nobel to establish the peace prize that bears his name, and she was the first woman to receive it, in 1905.

8. Since then, eight other women have received the same prize: Jane Addams (1931), Emily Greene Balch (1946), Mairead Corrigan and Betty Williams (1976), Mother Teresa (1979), Alva Reimer Myrdal (1982), Aung San Suu Kyi (1991) and Rigoberta Menchu (1992). It is worth noting that a higher percentage of women have been awarded the Peace Prize than any other Nobel Prize and that most of the awards were made within the past 20 years.

9. Women's participation in peace activities became most visible on the eve of the First World War. Many women both feared and strongly opposed the forthcoming hostilities. As a result, they became involved in traditional pacifist movements. In addition, some founded separate women's organizations aimed at the preservation of peace. One was the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, with the goals of disarmament and peace based on justice. The group of convenors of the League comprised a number of highly distinguished women.

10. Between 1900 and 1915, three other women's organizations focused on international relations were created. By 1930, three more international relations groups had been established as well as 10 professional organizations. All of these organizations, including the already existing international educational associations for women, had international peace as a primary concern.

11. The unprecedented damage to the civilian population during the Second World War led to another wave of strong anti-war feeling and opened a post-war era of peace-related activities. The women's organizations were especially strong in Europe and Japan, the regions most damaged by the War, and they focused on activities against war and especially against nuclear armaments.

12. Until the late 1960s, the mainstream of women's peace activities remained largely Eurocentric. The activities were carried out mainly through traditional

non-governmental structures and most activists were women from industrialized countries. However, with decolonization, national liberation and the creation of new independent States, often severely affected by armed conflicts, the participation of women from developing countries in the peace movement at national, regional and international levels began to increase. That fact, together with general trends in the world, put new issues such as development, the new international economic order, the environment, the struggle against apartheid and against violence in all its forms on the agenda for the 1970s. Education for peace expanded its purview. The new global understanding mobilized many professional people, religious groups, environmental activists, as well as women, who brought to the movement new thinking and alternative approaches to peace. Thus, since the 1970s, the movement has been called by many the "new peace movement".

B. The new peace movement

13. The new peace movement seeks to protect the environment, to ensure a more just distribution of resources and to create a democratic society. It is therefore not a movement that is focused on a single issue. Many female scholar members have sought to develop a holistic analysis of the interrelationships between various world problems. They have also focused on violence, whether it be personal, domestic, within the home, within the nation or between nations, as the core of world problems. Women have concluded that what is needed is another kind of society where all human beings could find the opportunity of fulfilling themselves as human beings without exploiting others. They have argued that the male-dominated, consumerist, competitive, militaristic culture should be changed. Gradually, instead of being primarily followers in organizations led by men, women have begun to play decisive roles in the new peace movement. Their contribution has become visible in terms of both activities and theory.

14. From the 1970s, the universality of the new peace movement and women's contribution to it meant increasing diversity in terms of forms, issues and methods of work. New grass-roots organizations and even less formal movements began to appear all over the world. In Europe and North America, the emphasis remained on disarmament (particularly nuclear disarmament) and security and cooperation in a divided Europe. Although women's peace-related activities in the East were confined to an official institutional structure and most of the activities and initiatives in the West were coming from unauthorized, grass-root organizations, they started using détente to develop closer cooperation between women from East and West and to promote common initiatives such as workshops, peace marches, exhibitions and educational programmes. They also developed a strong interest in the environment and made it one of their priorities. Another matter that attracted women's attention was education for peace. Also in the 1970s, the women's movement in the West started to be influenced strongly by feminist ideas. Some of these advocated radical changes in attitudes about global issues and some linked what was perceived as women's traditional oppression to the existence of patriarchy and to structural violence.

15. In developing countries, women's organizations were involved in global issues such as disarmament, the arms trade, development and a clean environment, but were also concerned with emerging local issues. For example, the women's movement in Latin America was greatly occupied with the defence of human's rights and eliminating violence against women.

16. The United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace (1976-1985) provided an important opportunity for the further development of women's peace activities. During the Decade, women met to exchange experience and to strengthen the dialogue between women from East and West and North and South. This was manifested in the Peace Tent in the NGO Forum organized parallel to the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace held in 1985. These discussions focused on a wide range of topics related to peace, including justice, women's rights, disarmament, and the elimination of violence and oppression.

17. In the face of international, regional and internal tensions and conflicts, debt, the environment, the widening gap between the world's rich and poor, refugees, starvation, illiteracy and the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), the women's peace movement has augmented its efforts to seek comprehensive alternative solutions that would increase attention to the justice that must underpin any lasting peace. Thus, it has not only expanded its concern for what is "right", but it has also begun to reflect on "might", and to address the elimination of all discrimination against women in decision-making and in the enforcement of decisions as crucial to a lasting peace.

18. With the end of the cold war between East and West, more attention is being given to the eradication of violence in all its forms. Women's rights and women's role in governance are on the agenda as well. Owing to the extreme poverty found in some parts of the world, and the national and ethnic conflicts in others, interest in the situation of refugees and migrants, humanitarian assistance, conflict resolution and peace-keeping is increasing. There is an increased realization that women should participate in the process of formulating and implementing the policies that affect them. Also, the new role of peace-making, which is not at all the same as war-making, demands attention and the contribution of all.

C. Actions taken by women's peace groups

19. Many women have consistently rejected the build-up of arms and militarization. After the explosion of nuclear weapons at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, women were among the leaders of the anti-nuclear movement. Anti-nuclear campaigns demanded a ban on all nuclear weapons, including their testing, development and proliferation. Women from various professions became involved. For example, the work of a bio-statistician, Rosalie Bertell and a physicist, Helen Caldicott, focused on the present and long-term dangers from radiation. A group of women formed the European Movement of Women against Nuclear Armament, held conferences, organized protests against nuclear proliferation and petitioned the Secretary-General U Thant. Some observers "... give a large measure of credit to women and women's organizations for amassing the political support which led to the negotiation and ratification of that [the nuclear-test ban of 1963] treaty". 2/

20. Although almost completely absent from government delegations, women played a major role in organizing public opinion for the special sessions of the General Assembly on disarmament held in 1978, 1982 and 1988. They distributed literature and organized exhibitions, workshops, information campaigns and demonstrations. They also sought to talk to the delegations in order to bring to their attention women's concerns and perspectives on disarmament.

21. Because of their concern with the tremendous waste of resources for armaments, women were also among the main organizers of the NGO Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development held at Stockholm in 1987 in preparation for the International Conference on the subject, organized by the United Nations in the same year. The statement adopted by the NGO Conference stated that "... the development issue should be reformulated to correct mistaken, paternalistic and misleading notions of development which are divorced from the reality ..." and concluded that there was no alternative to just participatory development as well as to disarmament, general and complete. Women from the NGO Committee on Disarmament at United Nations Headquarters in New York took advantage of the convening of "a panel of eminent personalities" by the Secretary-General, chaired by Inga Thorsson, and organized in 1986 a public forum to discuss the issues of development and disarmament.

22. Women's organizations, female activists and women demonstrating for peace did not associate military capacity, the stockpiling of weapons of mass destruction and the balance of terror with peace-keeping. Many, in fact, rejected "armed peace" and demanded fundamental changes in international and national norms. Women carried out a variety of protest actions. An example is the movement, Women for Peace, which developed spontaneously and simultaneously in Denmark, Finland and Norway. In Denmark, in January 1980, three housewives came together and discussed their concern about a new generation of nuclear weapons that were to be stationed in Denmark. They decided to circulate a petition. Six months later the petition had been signed by half a million women in Scandinavia and was presented to the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, held in 1980. Other actions of Women for Peace included international peace marches: the first, in 1981, from Copenhagen through the Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium to Paris; the second one, from Stockholm through Finland, Leningrad and Moscow to Minsk. This latter action was the first joint initiative of the independent peace movement from the West and the Soviet Women's Committee and Peace Committee. The third march started in Oslo and continued from New York to Washington, D.C. In 1982, women launched a campaign of collecting signatures for the establishment of a nuclear-free zone in the Nordic countries. They gathered together 2.5 million names. The Conference of Nordic Women for Peace in 1983, organized jointly with Soviet and American women, was unanimous in arguing that nuclear weapons had no borders, and that women had no say about their States' military although they were affected by it.

23. When Women for Peace was started in Scandinavia, its women founders did not know about other actions like the creation of the Women for Peace Movement in Switzerland in 1976, of Strike for Peace in the United States in 1964 or of Another Mother for Peace, also in the United States. The programmatic basis of the movement in Switzerland illustrates its non-governmental approach in its rejection of weapons of mass destruction and its emphasis on a moral principle that resources should not be wasted on armaments but that they should be directed to education, development or health care. The American Peace Links movement works on a similar principle by emphasizing that political changes without changes in moral and social norms are but temporary victories. Women and Peace, the movement for peace in Latin America, focuses on the prevention of a nuclear catastrophe, the need for disarmament, tolerance, education for peace and action against violence.

24. Women traditionally march for peace on 8 March. For example, in 1983, women from the United States and all parts of Europe gathered in Brussels to

lobby representatives of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and ambassadors of the States members of the Warsaw Treaty Organization against the deployment of new kinds of weapons. In West Berlin, women made a human chain between the embassies of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States. In the 1980s, in the United Kingdom, women camped at Greenham Common Air Force Base, demanding a public discussion of nuclear issues and opposing the installation of new nuclear weapons.

25. Women supported a Swedish initiative, the Great Peace Journey, which raised five questions for the consideration of the Member States. The questions addressed the issues of limiting the use of national forces to self-defence, totally banning weapons of mass destruction, banning the export of weapons, distributing the world's resources more equally and resolving conflicts peacefully. A 10-day Nordic Forum, held at Oslo in 1988, brought together 10,000 women. Women also became active for peace through various religious groups and organizations. Evangelischer Frauenbund der Schweiz constitutes an interesting example of such activities, focusing on a critical assessment of various aspects of peace, the security policy of Switzerland and the concept of the responsibility of citizens.

26. Women's peace activities have involved a direct struggle against publically supported or condoned violence. Examples are varied and include such instances as the silent demonstrations of Argentinean women at Plaza de Mayo against the mass "disappearances" of people during the period of a military government; the participation of women in the Philippines, including nuns, in peaceful efforts to overthrow the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos by stopping tanks deployed to attack rebelling troops; efforts to end hostilities in the regions of former Yugoslavia in 1991, including demonstrations by mothers and wives of soldiers in Croatia.

27. In other cases, women have sought to create their own channels to seek reconciliation between forces that are in conflict. For example, during the last decade, women from both parts of Cyprus organized a number of joint meetings and seminars aimed at the development of dialogue instead of hostility at the community level and promotion of understanding despite the division of the island. Similarly, joint meetings between Israeli and Palestinian women were, for many years, the only peaceful organized contact between those two peoples. And women of all races joined together in the struggle against apartheid, both in South Africa and internationally.

28. In sum, women are affected by foreign policy and security concerns, and have been active in trying to affect policy. They express themselves, organize, and try to persuade others to do "right". They have not used "might", violent or non-violent, to affect the decisions of those who actually control the means of force. Some are committed to only using non-violence; others do not wish to use force themselves but wish to affect it. Others would be willing to assume responsibility for exercising legitimate force - "might" that supports "right" - but have had no opportunity of doing so.

D. Education for peace

29. Women have also made an intellectual contribution to the public understanding of the issues and problems involved in peace and disarmament. For example, Alva Myrdal of Sweden has demonstrated the ineffectiveness of years of negotiation; Scilla McLean of the United Kingdom has shed light on the process of nuclear weapons decision-making and women's exclusion from that

decision-making; Inga Thorsson of Sweden has made clear that while women, the poor and the vulnerable suffer most, the quality of life for all is reduced by arms spending; and Ruth Leger Sivard of the United States, through her annual reports entitled World Military and Social Expenditures, has presented the latest statistics on arms spending in human terms, demonstrating how many human needs could not be met because of that expense.

30. Female researchers have sought the common roots of all forms of violence, which can range from family and personal violence to war, its best organized and most destructive form. They have noted that violence penetrates different cultures; in daily life, it takes various forms, such as blows, racial epithets and other verbal insults, physical assaults and torture, rape, disappearances and military attacks on an "enemy" community. Violence is sometimes used as a means to demonstrate power to maintain social or family order and to exercise or restore authority. Both men and women are victims of violence but women additionally experience violence that is gender specific, particularly violent sexual abuse, often by men who are armed while they are unarmed, and almost always by men who are physically larger than they are. The violence that women suffer in normal times is intensified by war. Rape and abuse is often present in the arrest, detention and interrogation of female prisoners.

31. Originally an official policy in countries in Eastern Europe, the idea of education for peace was taken up, in both theory and practice, by the women's movement and peace researchers in Europe and North America. Women in the peace movement realized that women everywhere play a specific role in education for peace. As parents, care providers and often as primary-school teachers, women have a profound influence on forming personalities. If they are conscious of that role, they can use it for instilling in others such values as respect for others, sharing, partnership, tolerance, the peaceful solution of conflicts and problems, and a sense of justice and equality. Therefore, peace education for women is considered by many an important priority.

32. A number of organizations have held meetings related to education for peace, with a focus on changing attitudes in the family and in society, proposing that boys and girls should be educated in the same fashion so that they can become caring, cooperative and responsible members of society. They have also suggested that girls should receive more encouragement to develop interests in public matters and in non-traditional careers.

33. Women have also become involved in activities against the production and sale of war toys, which in some countries, such as Denmark, have been outlawed. Major conferences against war toys have been held in countries as diverse as New Zealand, the Philippines and the United States and in various countries in Europe. Attention has also been given to the necessity of revising school curricula and textbooks in order to replace prevailing enemy images and traditional portrayals of women with more constructive models of democratic, just and equal attitudes and relations between people of different genders, races and nationalities. Many international networks and academic activities have been initiated, including teaching about alternatives to violence, conflict resolution, partnership and the necessity of personal involvement in the promotion of peace.

34. Women researchers have contributed to the development of a concept of education for peace, linking it to non-sexist education about creating equal opportunities for the development of the talents and interests of all children, regardless of their sex, and the necessity for the eradication of all

forms of violence within the family and society. They have argued that education for peace should clearly be based on the concept of partnership between men and women. Female researchers have also pointed to the perpetuation of sex stereotypes by the media that reflect a notion that girls are passive, submissive and weak and that women are more associated with housekeeping and the advertising of goods than with public functions.

E. Women in peace research

35. The definition of peace, contained in the Forward-looking Strategies (paragraph 13), reflects the concept of peace consistently promoted by the feminist scholars, according to which:

> "... Peace includes not only the absence of war, violence and hostilities at the national and international levels but also the enjoyment of economic and social justice, equality and the entire range of human rights and fundamental freedoms within the society.
>
> "... Peace cannot be realized under conditions of economic and sexual inequality, denial of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms, deliberate exploitation of large sectors of the population, unequal development of countries, and exploitative economic relations.
>
> "... Peace is promoted by equality of the sexes, economic equality and the universal enjoyment of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms. Its enjoyment by all requires that women be enabled to exercise their right to participate on an equal footing with men in all spheres of the political, economic and social life of their respective countries, particularly in the decision-making process, while exercising their right to freedom of opinion, expression, information and association in the promotion of international peace and cooperation."

36. For many women peace researchers, peace research is an inquiry into the means and possibilities of reducing violence, abolishing war and creating a just and equitable society. In these inquiries, women have emphasized the necessity of addressing violence and its traditional roots at all levels, and pointed to the interdependencies between sexism, other forms of discrimination and violence and militarism, the arms race and patriarchy. They have developed a holistic approach to peace and humanity, based on the assumption that there can be no real peace without: the elimination of all forms of oppression and discrimination; bridging the gap between the poor and the oppressed and the rich and the mighty; the application of basic principles of justice and fairness to all; participatory democracy; the utilization of all talents and abilities for human development with a human person as its objective; the preservation of a healthy environment; the demilitarization of war arsenals and people's minds; and the development of a new type of interpersonal and international relations based on partnership, tolerance and a win-win principle, instead of a win-lose one.

37. Based on analyses of women's peace activities and attitudes, many female peace researchers have advanced the following argument: Women tend to perceive things differently from men. The idea of killing is alien to women, perhaps because they are mainly associated with birth, giving life and nurturing. It is true that in certain situations women have resorted to violence

but, historically, aggressors have always been men. To women, peace means safeguarding children, home and life, rather than maintaining power, position, country, wealth or consolidating economic interests. Women as a group have never institutionalized violence nor created systems of oppression. They do not accept the logic behind military build-ups. They see all military systems as typically masculine with hierarchy and the understanding of power as a means of requiring others to obey. Women see power as the capacity to act, as ability. Thus violence reflects an absence of power. The greater power is, the less restrictive it is for the individual. This definition of power is what democracy really means. As long as a leader-dominated system is accepted there can be no real equality between people.

38. Furthermore, the women's movement is truly transnational because women's experience is universal. Women's actions for peace have been concerned with other people, particularly children; they have made use of various non-violent techniques; and have been trans-political and transnational, aimed at reaching other women from the opposing camp. Similarly, women have been concerned about the effects of military training on man's personality; women have utilized pacific images like flowers, birds or children in peace actions in contrast to the guns and war symbols used by male-dominated peace movements; and women have not asked about the political backgrounds of people joining the movement.

39. Female peace researchers are members of various academic institutions and organizations. However, in some cases, when the research questions most pertinent to women's perspectives could not be addressed within existing academic structures, women have founded their own institutions or undertaken research on their own. A women's network within the International Peace Research Association (IPRA) started holding regular meetings within the framework of the biennial conferences of IPRA.

40. Women have been able to work on behalf of peace through non-official channels to articulate their vision of what is right as well as women's deep reservations about the use of might. Women are extremely sensitive to the use of force, but they also wish to use the power of government (which applies the community's force) in positive ways. At present, most women have little direct connection with either force or decisions about it.

II. WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE MILITARY

41. It is correct to say both that women have never been, and also that they have always been, a part of the military. They have never routinely participated in the military in either the numbers or ways that men have participated. Nevertheless, they have always had a role, and individual women have done everything that men have done, including lead armies.

42. The issue of women's participation in the military is often controversial. Men often resist it and most women do not insist on the importance of such equality. To place the issue in context, it is necessary first to discuss the military as an institution and its importance for women. It is then useful to discuss policies related to women's participation in the military and what is known about their actual experience.

A. The military as an institution

43. The State has been defined by Max Weber as an institution that holds a monopoly on the legitimate use of force within a geographical area. The use

of force, then, is a defining characteristic of government. Much discussion occurs about why, when, where and how force is used. Less discussion occurs about who applies the force. In most countries most force, or legal violence, is implemented by young men at the direction of older men. The institutions that exercise society's force are the military and the police. They share many characteristics but only the military will be discussed here.

44. The military varies widely. A characteristic is the wearing of uniforms and the use of weapons. In some countries, the military is understood to have a domestic function i.e. to assist in maintaining order and in providing relief from disaster. In other countries, it is understood to have a primarily outward-looking assignment, to provide for the country's security against outsiders, either by being prepared to defend against an invasion or by being stationed, and even fighting, abroad to advance the country's interests. In both cases, the basis of the role is the fact that it organizes people into a disciplined formation to apply their force to the resolution of conflicts or the solution of problems where this kind of discipline is needed.

45. In some countries, the military is an egalitarian institution, or at least one with a single promotion ladder. In others, it is clearly divided between soldiers and their officers, and it is rare for an enlisted person to become an officer or vice versa. In some countries, being in the military is a career, a way of life chosen as one chooses an occupation. In others, it is primarily a temporary service or obligation.

46. In many countries, participation is compulsory for men. In some, it is considered an onerous duty, while in other countries service represents an opportunity. In addition, military service can lead to benefits such as preference for civil service posts in civilian life. The number of people who serve in the military at any time also varies. In developed countries, the ratio of soldiers to the population is around 9:1,000. Even though they may have large armies, developing countries have a ratio of less than 5:1,000. The highest ratios are found in the Middle East, with an average ratio of 18:1,000.

47. The military accounts for a large portion of public expenditure. In some countries, military expenditures represent over 10 per cent of the gross national product (GNP), which can be the case in countries with a low GNP like Cambodia or Guyana, or countries with a high GNP like Israel or Qatar. In other countries, military expenditures are under 1 per cent of GNP as, for example, in Ghana, Iceland and Mexico. For years, USSR and the United States outspent the next largest spenders (which were France, the Federal Republic of Germany and the United Kingdom) by a ratio of 8:1 even though this accounted for about 9 and 14 per cent, respectively, of GNP. 3/

48. In many countries, the military is the Government, or it periodically threatens to, or does, assume control of the Government. In other countries, the military follows the direction of an elected civilian Government. Even in these countries, however, military experience may be considered important to those who aspire to leadership in the Government. For example, in the United States, 11 presidents out of 39 had first won laurels as generals, and an additional 17 had had military experience.

49. Since the Second World War, three women, Margaret Thatcher, Golda Meir and Indira Gandhi, have been heads of Government in their countries during times of war with other countries. They have been cited as evidence that gender makes

no difference in leadership with regard to war and peace issues. However, more recently, examples can be found of women who have apparently become national leaders precisely because a civil war was in process or there was a potential for civil war and a leader was desired who preferred not to use violence and who would try to prevent others from using it. Examples include Ertha Pascal-Trouillot in Haiti, Violeta Chamorro de Barrios in Nicaragua and Corazon Aquino in the Philippines.

50. While the defining activity of the military is the approved use of force (which involves not only killing others but also risking and sometimes sacrificing one's own life), most military personnel never kill and are not killed. Indeed, one could argue that they are most "successful" when they are not used. Military personnel see themselves as peace-keepers and peacemakers, providing security and stability, both of which are important to society. International norms, however, do not accept these as ends in themselves. Rather they must be tempered by justice and the exercise of might must be right.

51. Just as the military is an integral part of the political system, many civilians are a part of the military system even if they are not a part of the military in the sense of wearing uniforms or using weapons. 4/ Economic dependence on the military can be widespread. Civilians who work for, or closely with, the military may represent a ratio of 1:2 of the uniformed force. In addition, many businesses support the military directly by contracting to provide weapons, housing, uniforms, technical expertise; others do so by providing entertainment, retail services, homes and even churches.

52. In examining the military, both those that are legally sanctioned and those that are not have to be considered. Both can be equally deadly and can be as committed either to justice or to self interest; indeed, military forces in opposition to Governments often use more women than legal armies do.

B. The importance of the military for women

53. The military is important to women in their role as citizens. Governments have a military, by definition. Most of the time this military is not involved in combat but involves considerable public expenditure. Citizens should, therefore, be concerned about the kind of military they have. Many women think of the military as "men's business" but if they are to be responsible citizens, women must examine their consent to, and support of, their country's military.

54. The historical reservation of military roles to men is the result of largely social constructions. Military service is built into male rites of passage and a male stereotype is based on the warrior or the role of protector. 5/ These stereotypes are often used as an inducement to service and as a means of maintaining discipline. They cease to be effective if women are in the military undertaking the same tasks. This helps to explain why both young men and many older men are opposed to women in the military, or, at least, are opposed to them in warrior (combat) roles.

55. The maintenance of this separation between men's and women's roles can result in a community or society in which only men serve in a role that can be called "the protector", and in which all women are assigned the antithetical role of "the protected". It has been argued that it is better to have "defenders" who are both men and women, and who have both the responsibility of protecting and the security of being protected. 6/

56. The acceptance of a protective role presupposes the existence of a threat. Some peacemakers argue that Governments and the military have a vested interest in exaggerating the nature of possible threats in order to gather more resources and to gain deference from the protected. The capacity to criticize and the energy to sustain a commitment to change almost always depend on involvement and if women are excluded from the military they will have difficulty in advocating changes in the institution. Moreover, the nature of modern war, as well as the kind of indiscriminate violence it engenders, calls into question the capacity of protectors to protect.

57. Most women tacitly support the military as a necessary institution but one that does not involve them and that permits them to distance themselves from the consequences of decisions to use force. Most women do not call for the elimination of force in society, but they are willing to have men exercise it for them. In that sense, they support force and condone men doing what they would not do or do not want to do themselves.

58. The division of roles increases the pressure on men to do whatever they perceive to be necessary to provide protection. It provides a justification for actions that might otherwise not be taken. Women's distance from war also enables them to stereotype the enemy and to avoid knowing too much about what is being done by their military on their behalf. This is similar to the distancing that occurs in a war using advanced technology, such as missiles, where the persons who may kill large numbers of people are not a risk themselves and never see the results of their actions. In terms of the use of military force, while women can withhold their consent because they lack almost all access to the use of force, whether legitimate or illegitimate, women's relationship to politics and to government is qualitatively different from men's.

59. This relationship is complicated by the fact that, as shown below, when women serve in the military their jobs often approximate civilian work; they are distinguished quite clearly from "fighting men". A problem occurs, however, when the military use high levels of technology or when they fight a long way from home. Indeed many of the persons serving abroad do so in a support rather than a combat capacity. In fact, a majority of men may actually serve with women in a support capacity. They then have to acknowledge their own non-combat or protected status, which is something they would not have to do if women were not there.

60. The asymmetry of the specialized roles of protector and protected suggests that full citizenship requires "defenders" who both protect and are protected (just as citizens are both subject and sovereign), which is not the case now. At present, it is men who are the protectors and men who are the threat, and also men who make the rules about the nature of the protection to be given.

C. Women's participation in the military

61. No systematic country data exist yet on women in the military. In order to describe the situation accurately, data would be required on the number and percentage of women serving in the military by service and rank. They would show the military assignments open to women: e.g. medical, clerical and administrative, support and combat, and also their service and rank. They would include information on women's eligibility to attend military academies, and on whether gender was integrated into service and training. They would indicate whether women and men were subject to conscription and whether pregnant women could be retained in the services.

62. The largest amount of information on women's participation in the military is available on the States members of NATO and the Western European Union. The States members of these organizations, however, have not fought a war "at home" for almost 50 years. The rules that apply are formal and have been created following regular governmental practice. Women are not conscripted although men often are; half of the countries have legislation or policies excluding women from combat, although women's service is being encouraged and is for the same length of time and the same pay and includes the same training and discipline as men. Most rules permit pregnant women to remain in military service; most provide paternal or maternal leave and half provide child care; most limit the rank that women can achieve. 7/

63. The differing rules do not yet seem to have had an effect on participation rates. Canada, which is fully egalitarian in principle, has only 12 per cent women in the military. The United States, which prohibits women's service in combat, has 11 per cent. In five of the countries, women's participation is 2-4 per cent. In 8 of the 15 countries, the participation of women is negligible.

64. Drawing on a variety of sources, one researcher has compiled data on women's military participation in 45 countries. 8/ In only three countries are women reported as making up more than 10 per cent of service members. In most countries, women perform different functions, on average, from men. For example, in Israel, where service is mandatory for women, the role and conditions of service are considerably different from those of men, and do not extend to combat. Only 10 per cent of the members of the permanent military are women.

65. Even when women may serve as regular members of a State military, there is usually a restriction on combat. A handful of countries state that the combat role is open, including Belgium, Canada, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Venezuela and Zambia. No detailed information is available for the latter two countries. In four of the other five, the grand total of women serving is less than 6,000 (a little over 1,000 per country), and the majority of them are probably not in combat units. Any change, then, has primarily been one of removing restrictions. Canada is considered to represent the major experiment in equality for it recently removed all restrictions based on gender except for service in certain submarines. Women represent 12 per cent of those on active duty and 20 per cent of those in the reserves, but few are in combat specialities. Many of the jobs that women do could be done by civilians, and in other countries are. The principal opening for women officers is as medical personnel - originally as nurses and now as doctors as well. Enlisted women tend to serve in clerical and administrative positions.

66. Less is known about the participation of women in irregular military service, although, as seen below, there is some evidence that these formations are more open to women's participation.

67. Over the last 50 years, the experience of women in the military has begun to be documented. A large part of this derives from personal narratives and historical accounts, but shows the breadth and variety of women's military experience in the twentieth century, although it is usually country-specific.

68. The practice of women's participation often differs from that which would be expected from formal policy. In the throes of national mobilization, States make decisions that they would not otherwise make. Also, while States

may wish to have a monopoly on violence, irregular forces often exist. They may fight alongside or in parallel with State forces; they may fight against a colonial enemy, or they may fight the Government. Part of the irregularity of irregular forces is that women participate in varying numbers and roles, because there are no rules.

69. There is some evidence that women's participation is "natural" in that it regularly occurs everywhere, even if it sometimes represents a small percentage of the total fighting force. Characteristically, the women who contribute directly to a war effort are noted as heroines at the time; however, they are usually forgotten when peace comes. One author has concluded that when pressed by events or in fluid circumstances, women have proved themselves equally competent, but that this has never been taken as proof of a permanent or universal ability. 9/

70. Mass mobilization occurs especially when the homeland is threatened. Russia mobilized women during both the First World War and the Second World War. 10/ In the First World War, women served in both integrated and all-women units, one of which was committed to combat apparently for the purpose of shaming deserting Russian men. During the Second World War, women were mobilized first for industry and then for the military. Perhaps 800,000 served in anti-aircraft teams, in tanks, as snipers, in combat aviation regiments and as military physicians (40 per cent of the total). Their role in the navy was minor. One lesson, then, may be that women are not called upon to do high-tech, civilian-like jobs distant from the fighting, or to participate in the mini-communities aboard ship. States see them as a reserve to be pressed into service late and then to do whatever is needed including combat.

71. Viet Nam also mobilized women extensively. 11/ Women participated in village defence units against the French and were indispensable to the transportation system in the later Viet Nam war. When the bombing of North Viet Nam began, guerrilla units were directed to increase the percentage of women in them to 50 per cent in the lowlands and 12 per cent in the minority areas. Few women, however, served in commanding positions. Similarly, partisan warfare in Yugoslavia in the 1940s involved 100,000 women soldiers and some 2 million women supporters. Like the male partisans, some 25 per cent of the female partisans died. 12/ Women were active participants in the independence war of Algeria from 1954-1962. There is documentation (probably involving an undercount) of about 3 per cent of the militants being women. Many of those were imprisoned and about the same number were killed. Following the war, however, women largely ceased to participate in the military. 13/

72. A final form of military participation involves forces committed to changing a Government. Reports suggest that women are likely to participate in large numbers on the side of change, but are less likely to be included in the organized, State military. Accounts from El Salvador, for example, report women's participation at a rate of 40 per cent and in the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) of Nicaragua, a rate of 30 per cent has been reported. 14/ Women have not been reported as participants in the military organization of the former President Somoza or in that of the Contras, both of which fought the FSLN.

73. While policy tends to be protective of women, reality is not. Wars take place where people live and those who are killed or injured are more often the unarmed than the armed. In practice, the difference is less whether women will be affected by conflict or participate in it if necessary, but rather how and under what conditions.

III. WOMEN IN UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING ACTIVITIES

74. The renewed United Nations role to assist world peace by committing resources, including a capacity to use force, to support the principles set out in the Charter of the United Nations is a major development of the late twentieth century. The Organization has mounted peace-keeping efforts since its founding, but in recent years the number of these operations has multiplied.

75. Women have been active participants in many of these operations at the civilian level. In December 1992, two of the major operations (in Angola and in South Africa) were headed by women officials of the United Nations Secretariat. A relatively high percentage of civilian monitors, administrators and other personnel in major operations like Angola, Cambodia and Namibia have been women. Women have also been found among United Nations and voluntary organizations providing humanitarian relief services, often in areas in which armed conflict is taking place.

76. There is less evidence, however, that women have been significant participants among the military peace-keepers. In addition, United Nations Headquarters security staff have been sent on a number of operations, but figures have not been kept on the number of women among them. (Since security personnel are recruited locally, the United Nations does not keep statistics on the percentage of women among them.)

77. Women in the Professional category who have participated as civilians in peace-keeping operations have mostly been seconded from the regular staff of the Organization. Women are much less frequent among staff specifically appointed for mission service, a category of outside recruits. Indeed, of the group of staff appointed for mission service, on 30 August 1992, only 1 out of 42 persons in the Professional and higher categories was a woman (A/47/416, table 9A).

78. The absence of women among military personnel in United Nations peace-keeping forces reflects their absence in the military of those countries providing troops to the peace-keeping operations. There are no statistics available on the participation of women in peace-keeping generally, although they are being compiled as part of the 1995 update of The World's Women: Trends and Statistics.

79. There is anecdotal evidence that women civilian peace-keepers performed at least as well as their male colleagues in their roles, which included heading operations at the district or regional level. There was some suggestion that their methods of dealing with potential conflict were more effective, by being less confrontational, than those used by men. The role of women in recent peace-keeping operations, however, has not been systematically studied.

80. The issue of women's participation takes on a particular meaning in peace-keeping, the main purpose of which is to avoid or to defuse conflict in order to permit the peaceful settlement of disputes. This is a role that, in domestic practice, is performed more by the police than by the military. Police work has, like that of the military, been principally men's work. It has also been understood as a service occupation and, although it is a dangerous occupation, it is not one that has been seen as a path to more important positions. In police work, the single most dangerous activity has been intervention in domestic disputes. In this activity, it has been found that women police

officers are more successful than men. They seem to be more skilled at defusing tension, or in getting conflict to end pacifically.

81. As peace-keeping increases in importance, the question will need to be raised whether the exclusion, in practice, of women from many peace-keeping tasks is reasonable. Given the fact that, as it has developed, peace-keeping has characteristics related to conflict resolution that are different from traditional military roles, an increased presence of women could make these operations more effective.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

82. Women's long participation in non-governmental activities related to peace has been fruitful in organizing demonstrations, peace education and indicating alternatives to a militarized society. The focus has been on avoiding or ending violence, which is virtually always perpetrated by men. Women peace researchers have shown the common roots of all forms of violence, from family and personal violence to war, and have indicated that there can be no real peace without the elimination of all forms of discrimination and oppression. This has included advocating participatory democracy, the preservation of a healthy environment, and the elimination of instruments of war, as well as ensuring the prevalence of values and attitudes for peace and developing a new type of interpersonal and international relations based on partnership and tolerance.

83. The concept of education for peace is a way of changing attitudes in the family and society and of combating stereotyping in education. It is linked to non-sexist education and to creating equal opportunities for the development of children. It is based on instilling the notion that all forms of violence within the family and society have to be eliminated and that the overall goal is to create a just and equitable society.

84. Although women's peace activities have involved a direct struggle against publicly supported or condoned violence, their means have been limited to non-governmental activities. Generally, Governments have been reluctant to admit that non-governmental peace groups affect policy; however, they have had to take into account this expression of public opinion.

85. People have long seen Government and the military as a means of making and keeping peace. This is because they see the use of legitimate force (that agreed to by the community) as appropriate, effective and a necessary means to social order. Of course, force is most effective when it is not used. Women, both through the examination of their own experiences and the work of peace researchers, now have a more sophisticated understanding of violence. They know it is more than public, physical violence and that it includes personal and structural violence. Those who are not pacifists accept the need for institutions to enforce agreed-upon rules. They acknowledge that justice is given definition by rule makers (the Government), and that it is enforced by those having a monopoly on the use of legitimate armed force (the police and the military). They have also realized that there are few women in decision-making positions in Government and almost none in the military.

86. All citizens bear a responsibility for their country's military; however, many citizens are insulated, detached from, and able to deny, the consequences of official action or inaction. Indeed, civilians, but especially civilian

women, have so little connection with the military that it is easy for them not to acknowledge responsibility for it.

87. Fulfilling a responsibility to participate in decisions related to the use of society's force requires that women participate in Government at the decision-making level, and that they participate in the implementation of policies. Thus, they need to participate in the military and police too. They have that right under international norms enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (see General Assembly resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (see General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex). The question can fairly be asked whether women would be able to achieve equality in participation in decision-making on issues of war and peace if they were denied equal access to careers in the military at all levels.

88. Experience in those countries where women have sought to exercise that right suggest that there will be deep resistance to women's full participation, resistance that is not based on either logic or empirical fact. Some of the objections related to law, equipment or physical strength can be addressed by evidence and reasoned discussion but those related to gender roles as they are traditionally expressed require an effort to examine those roles in a wider context of social and economic change.

89. This wider context includes both wider experience and role expectations for both women and men, including the experience of caring for others - children and other dependants - and the exercise of responsibility for order within the community and society: roles that tended to be divided by sex.

90. This examination can be bolstered by more systematic research into issues related to women and the peace process, including particularly the experience of women in the military. For example, States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women could be encouraged to report on their experience when examining national efforts to implement article 7.

91. There would seem to be little doubt that a more equitable balance of men and women working together would surely change the military as an institution. Some of the questions that might be raised are worthy of reflection: Would women place new items on the agenda? Would their power be magnified because of their visibility? What changes would occur in men's behaviour? Would the presence of women restrain men in their behaviour regarding non-military women? Would a restraint be placed on the kind of behaviour that has led to atrocities?

92. The United Nations has an opportunity to set an example by using men and women together in its peace-keeping operations. At the civilian level, this means implementing norms of equality in recruitment, selection and assignment. In terms of military forces, it implies encouraging those countries providing troops for peace-keeping to include women in their contingents, and to make training in peace-keeping available to them.

93. To bolster this, the possibility of studying gender aspects of recent peace-keeping and humanitarian operations, with a view to eliminating stereotypes and documenting women's contribution, should be considered. In addition, statistics on the participation of women in these operations should

routinely be collected and disseminated. As women and men begin working together, it is urgent that their effectiveness be carefully observed and reported.

Notes

1/ Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15-26 July 1985 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10), chap. I, sect. A.

2/ Scilla Mclean et al., Role of Women in Peace Movements, in the Development of Peace Research and in the Promotion of Friendly Relations Between Nations (Paris, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 1980), p. 24.

3/ U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers 1989 (Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1990), p. 33.

4/ See, especially, the work of Cynthia Enloe in Women and the Military System, Eva Isaksson, ed. (New York, St. Martin's Press, 1988).

5/ See the analysis in Judith Hicks Stiehm, Arms and the Enlisted Woman (Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1989), especially in chapter 10 "Myths necessary to the pursuit of war".

6/ See Judith H. Stiehm, "The protector and the protected" in Women and Men's Wars (Oxford, Pergamon Press, 1983)

7/ See Assembly of the Western European Union, "The role of women in the armed forces", Defense Committee Report, 13 May 1991 (Document 1267).

8/ Xiaolin Li of the University of Maryland, drawing on Carolyn Becraft, Women in the Military, 1980-1990 (Washington, D.C., Women's Research and Education Institute, 1990); Isaksson, (op. cit.); Susan L. Scheuer, "Equality of rights and the Canadian armed forces: Is there a future role for female non-combatants", Defense Analysis, vol. 5, No. 1, pp. 19-29; Sandra Carson Stanley and Mady Wechsler Segal, "Military women in Nato: An update," Armed Forces and Society, 14 (No. 4, Summer 1988), pp. 559-585; Organization Division of the General Department of Political Work of the People's Liberation Army of China, Woman Soldiers in China Today (Beijing, The People's Liberation Army's Art and Literature Publisher, 1990).

9/ Anne Eliot Griesse and Richard Stites, "Russia: revolution and war" in Nancy L. Goldman, ed., Female Soldiers - Combatants or Noncombatants? (Westport, Connecticut, Greenwood Press, 1982), pp. 61-84.

10/ Ibid.

11/ See William J. Duiker, "Vietnam: war of insurgency" in Goldman, op. cit., pp. 107-122; and Shelly Saywell, Women in Wars (Markham, Ontario, Penguin, 1985), pp. 192-258, about the women who served with French and US forces.

12/ Barbara Jancar provides accounts both in "Yugoslavia: War of Resistance" in Goldman, op. cit., pp. 85-105, and "Women Soldiers in Yugoslavia's National Liberation Struggle, 1941-1945" in Isaksson, op. cit., pp. 47-61.

13/ Djamila Amrane, "Algeria: anticolonial war" in Goldman, op. cit., p. 124; and Marie-Aimee Helie-Lucas, "The role of woman during the Algerian liberation struggle and after" in Isaksson, op. cit., pp. 171-189.

14/ Hermione Harris, "Women and war: the case of Nicaragua" in Isaksson, op. cit., p. 191.